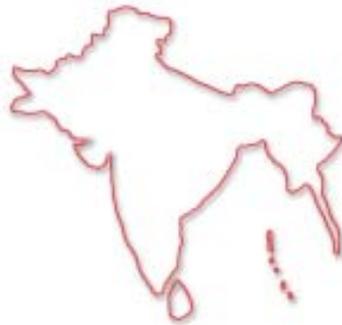


The Resurgent India

A Monthly National Review

March 2015



“Let us all work for the Greatness of India.”

– The Mother

Year 5

Issue 12

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Editor : Ms. Garima Sharma, B-45, Batra Colony, Village Bharatpur, P.O. Kaushal Ganj, Bilaspur Distt. Rampur (U.P)

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SUCCESSFUL FUTURE

(Full of Promise and Joyful Surprises)

Botanical name: Gaillardia Pulchella

Common name: Indian blanket, Blanket flower, Fire-wheels

Year 5

Issue 12

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A Declaration

We do not fight against any creed, any religion.

We do not fight against any form of government.

We do not fight against any social class.

We do not fight against any nation or civilisation.

We are fighting division, unconsciousness, ignorance, inertia and falsehood.

We are endeavouring to establish upon earth union, knowledge, consciousness, Truth, and we fight whatever opposes the advent of this new creation of Light, Peace, Truth and Love.

- The Mother

(Collected works of the Mother 13, p. 124-25)

THE NEW LAW IN LAND ACQUISITION: A DRASTIC REVERSAL OR CONTINUATION OF STATUS-QUO?

The land acquisition bill has followed a tumultuous political trajectory, and the deadlock is no closer to being resolved now than it was a year back. When, in 2013, the UPA-II finally succeeded in passing its landmark land acquisition law titled ‘The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act’, the law was widely seen as a result of the precipitation of efforts to address the injustices inherent in the colonial era land law – the Land Acquisition Act of 1894 (LAA 1894) – according to which land acquisition could be conducted arbitrarily by the state in the name of ‘public purpose’. The colonial era law incorporated no clear understanding of the idea of ‘public purpose’ in the name of which the land acquisition by the state was sought to be justified and had no real mechanism for addressing the grievances and demands of landowners with regard to compensation, resettlement and livelihood. The 1894 law was a product of reforms and amendments to a series of British India land laws from 1857 to 1870, and was based on a promotion of the vested British interest of development of India’s infrastructural economy – most prominently the railways – for fulfilling the extractive accumulation motives of Britain.

The 1894 colonial legislation was based on the legal doctrine of ‘eminent domain’. It is this doctrine that lies at the heart of the general idea of land acquisition in any country. According to the concept of ‘eminent domain’ which first found expression in the works of Grotius in 17th century, the property of citizens or subjects constitutes such a domain which the state can use out of extreme necessity or for fulfilling a public purpose, and, in return, can compensate the affected citizens for their losses. It has not been laid out in the Indian Constitution, and, as a result, historical disputes over land acquisition by the state have played out variously over the years. The doctrine of eminent domain has been justified to curb

the economic fallouts from the collective action problems that ensue in trying to voluntarily acquire consent from the landowners prior to taking their land. The classic economic problem is that each landowner will have an incentive to maximize his own interest, so he may threaten not to sell the land in the hope that others will sell their lands, so that he will, thus, be able to retain his land and also be able to get the benefits of the overall project that is developed. Since each landowner will behave in such a way, no one will give their consent and the project will not come up at all. This necessitates the power of the state under eminent domain.

How sound this classic economic logic is can only be tested against real world circumstances – it may very well be applicable to the rich farmers of the West, but not in the Indian context. The logic of such reasoning is belied in the way the land acquisition process has played out in India, and how strong the collective mobilizations against land acquisition in India have been. Such mobilizations thwart the assumptions about rational individual farmers acting in isolation to maximize their own gains. They have been shaped by the political circumstances surrounding the process of land acquisition after Independence.

Unsurprisingly, the independent Indian republic inherited the colonial law of 1894 as a part of the rest of its constitutional inheritance of the colonial era systems and institutions. The major question is why this colonial era constitutional baggage continues to remain with us despite the dynamic nature of the Indian society? As it now stands, the draconian law is fully geared towards making the process of land acquisition easier for the state, with deliberate ambiguity over the definition of public purpose, urgency clause and issues of compensation creating practical complications that precipitate in conflict and forcible land acquisition for the fulfillment of corporate interests. However, this was not always the case. Since the doctrine of eminent domain was not enunciated in the Constitution, legal disputes over land acquisition after Independence were decided according to the changing political reality. The central

conflict in the early years of Independence was mainly between the fundamental right to property under Article 19 of the Constitution and the legitimacy of the state in acquiring land from big landlords to ensure the welfare of the landless and the tenants. With a few exceptions like the 1952 Supreme Court judgment, the dispute was almost always settled by the judiciary in the favour of big landlords' right to property, despite the fact that the government wanted to introduce pro-poor land reforms to break the monopoly of the zamindars over the land. It was only during the 1970s when the judiciary was brought under the authoritarian control of Mrs. Gandhi's government and with the scrapping of the fundamental right to property in 1978 that there was acknowledged the need to promote land reforms to ensure redistributive justice. Thus, the eminent domain or the state's absolute power to acquire land was viewed as a socialist ideal conforming to the interests of the landowners and the dependent landless and wage farmers. Moreover, the power of the state to acquire land also underwent a series of other Parliamentary amendments in the immediate post-Independence period to prevent the judiciary from upholding the right to property of the landowners, mainly through the First Amendment and the 25th Amendment. However, this early acquisition by the state in the name of welfare could not be sustained for long, and over the years land acquisition underwent drastic changes. Three major factors were responsible for this:

First, acquisition was fraught with challenges as the resistance to land reforms also came from the big landowners who were opposed to acquisition of land for redistributive purposes and formed a sizeable electoral lobby.

Second, the strong state under Mrs. Gandhi began to promote its own interests in a political environment fraught with mounting corruption and degradation. The rights of the poor and the landless who were supposed to have been the beneficiaries of land reform increasingly took a backseat. Through a series of amendments, it now became possible to avoid paying compensation for the

deprivation of property under Article 300A except to tillers of cultivated land and minority educational institutions. The right to compensation excluded from its purview the vast majority of landowners and landless peasants and wage workers who were displaced.

Third, the government, from 1980s, began to operate in active collusion with corporate interests. In 1984, the government passed a landmark amendment to the Land Acquisition Act (1894), whereby it expanded the scope of 'public purpose' for which the land could be acquired. It now no longer simply included public utilities in which the government was the main stakeholder, but private projects also. **This amendment marks a watershed moment in land acquisition reforms, as besides the state, the zamindars and the landless poor, it now brought in the corporates as a new player. It was also a decisive step backwards and made the new policy of land acquisition even more retrogressive than the colonial law.**

It was after this period that major displacements arising out of land acquisition began in a newly liberalizing economy from the 1990s onwards. It precipitated in major protests against land acquisition for Special Economic Zones (SEZs) during the 2000s, reaching its peak with the infamous Nandigram and Singur cases in West Bengal in 2007. The mounting voices against land acquisition had begun to affect the electoral prospects of the major party in power viz. the Congress, as states like Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Assam were gripped by protests against forcible acquisitions and states like Haryana and Uttar Pradesh increasingly agitated against inadequate compensation provided. It was in response to the snowballing controversy over land acquisition that the UPA-I government sought to repeal the 19th century law and promulgated a new land bill in 2007. The Land Acquisition (Amendment) Bill of 2007 was an attempt to address the coercive nature of the colonial legislation while ensuring that the process of development, industrialization and urbanization did not face any hurdles in the process of acquisition, thereby according greater

priority to the economic goals of the government. Under this bill, 'public purpose' included strategic and other works of the state such as naval, military, air-force and infrastructure projects. However, the 2007 bill had to be eventually dropped due to large-scale acquisition for the SEZs in the name of Public Private Partnership (PPP) and rampant government corruption, which led to protests from landowners, citizens' groups and NGOs.

Finally, the Land Acquisition Rehabilitation and Resettlement Bill (LARR) was promulgated in 2011 and was ultimately cleared by the Parliament in 2013 in the form of Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Bill (RTFCTLARR). It was the bill that sought to do away with the LAA 1894 radically by bringing into consideration, rehabilitation and resettlement for the first time. The 2013 law sought to address the injustices involved in the process of land acquisition by introducing a number of radical changes, such as:

- Mandating Social Impact Assessment (SIA) in case of large-scale displacement of people.
- Obtaining the consent of 70% of landowners for acquiring land for Public-Private Partnership Projects and of 80% of landowners in case of private projects.
- The compensation proposed was four times the market rate in rural areas and twice the market rate in urban areas, as well as providing a one-time compensation for other affected parties.
- It also mandated that the government had to pay for any damage caused to the land or the crops in the process of acquisition.
- The government could not acquire multi-crop irrigated area, except minimally and as a last resort and never above 5% of the state total cultivable area. It also had to develop an equivalent area of cultivable wasteland or deposit an equivalent amount with the state government to be invested in promoting food security.
- Very importantly, the land acquired under the law which remained unused for a period of five years would be returned to the appropriate state government.

The cardinal features of the 2013 law appear dramatically opposed to the current government's land acquisition bill viz. RTFCTC 2015. Widely viewed as echoing the draconian colonial law and vociferously opposed by even NDA's own allies, the current bill, promulgated through an ordinance, seemingly reverses the 'pro-poor' conditions set forth in the 2013 law, by removing the SIA, the consent clause or the requirement to obtain prior consent of the landowner before acquisition in case of major projects, expanding the range of projects under 'public purpose' to presumably favour the capital more, and reversing the retrospective application of the law such that unused land would not be returned to the state government. Despite the nine amendments introduced recently to make the bill's passage possible in the Rajya Sabha the bill continues to reflect a compromise and dilution rather than a genuine change. Some of the main features, including the latest amendments, of the bill that have acted as a bone of contention are:

- The 13 acts (such as the National Highways Act, Railways Act) which were excluded from the RTFCTLARR 2013 have been brought under its purview. Thus, their rehabilitation, resettlement and compensation policies have been merged into one policy.

- Exemptions of five categories of projects from certain provisions viz. industrial corridors, PPP projects, rural infrastructure, affordable housing and defence. Of all these areas, the major protests are against removing the consent clause for industrial corridors and PPP projects. In response to the protests, as a part of the nine amendments that were floated by the government, it was stipulated that industrial corridors would be built by government or government undertakings and the land acquired can be up to 1 km of the designated railway line or industrial corridor. It also removed social infrastructure projects from the exempted categories, as a part of the nine amendments.

- While the RTFCTLARR 2013 mandates that 70% and 80% consent requirements be obtained in case of PPP and private projects respectively, the 2015 bill removes these consent requirements in

case of the categories mentioned above.

- While the RTFTC 2013 mandated the identification of families and an assessment of the social impact of the projects, the above categories have also been exempted from Social Impact Assessments in the current 2015 bill.

- Unlike in the previous Act, it would also be possible to acquire irrigated multi-crop land without worrying about being limited by a ceiling under the categories of projects mentioned above. However, due to protests, as a part of nine amendments the government stipulated that it must be ensured that the land acquired must be in keeping with the minimum land required for the project. It should also conduct a survey of wasteland first.

- While the RTFTC 2013 applied to ‘private companies’ only, the current 2015 bill makes a significant departure by applying it to ‘private entities’. Since private entities may include a host of other private organizations including non-profit bodies and partnerships, there have been widespread protests by the opposition parties against this change also.

- Though the current 2015 bill had amended the RTFTC 2013 to include private hospitals and educational institutions also under its purview, due to widespread protests about the “public” function of these enterprises, they have been excluded again as a part of the nine amendments introduced by the Modi government.

- Another point of criticism of the 2015 bill is that it amended the RTFTC 2013 to ensure that now prior government sanction would be required to prosecute a government official for an offence in the process of acquisition.

- To ensure compliance with rehabilitation and resettlement norms, the government, as a part of nine amendments, provides for compulsory employment to one person of the family displaced, instead of just a general promise of employment as was done before.

It is, thus, clear that after passing some of the key amendments, the bill looks much better than how it was originally promulgated. Critically, the compensation remains untouched and the government

promises to hold a survey of wastelands and acquisition of multi-crop land only to a provable minimum. However, apart from the social infrastructure projects, the need of consent for the other four categories of projects remains elusive. This will considerably curb the bargaining power of the landowners and force them to accept the amount of compensation fixed under the bill. Whether the amount of compensation fixed even under RTFTC 2013 viz. four times the market rate in rural areas and twice in urban areas is just a formality or really in accordance with the needs and wishes of the landowners, remains questionable.

Thus, despite the gaping difference between the 2013 and 2015 versions of the bill, it does not mean that the previous law of 2013 laid the foundations of justice in land acquisition any more than the current proposed bill. The 2013 land law was not a genuine instrument for expressing the changing aspirations and social reality on the ground, but was merely a compromise and an accommodation. It was a product of the amended land acquisition law of 1984, which had expanded the idea of public purpose to include state intervention to acquire land on behalf of companies also – something that was not present in the original law of 1894 based on limited compulsory acquisition. The amendment of 1984, in fact, reflected the intended changes in the patterns of land acquisition to make it more in tune with the coming era of capitalist dominance during and after the late 1980s. **The subsequent bill in 2013 did not depart from this reality of privileging the interests of the capital, but only proposed measures to counter-balance the side-effects of land acquisition on the farmers and other implicated groups. As laid down in the 1984 amendment, the concept of public purpose continued to be conflated with public-private interests.**

Much like the current proposed law by the Modi government, therefore, even the previous land law was based on a sweeping, overarching idea of ‘development’, assuming that farmers would want to be a part of the development process and contribute to economic growth by foregoing the claim to their lands. We cannot,

in fact, proceed with any such assumption. Therefore, instead of deriving solutions based on broad assumptions about the rural communities and landowners, there is a need to bring the fundamental problems on the ground to bear in policy. In this regard, the most critical questions are those of compensation and food security, with the latter being a particularly important issue in the light of the food scarcity and the reality of the deterioration in food quality being faced by the country. Despite this, the current proposed law only mentions a voluntary survey of wastelands for land acquisition purposes rather than a compulsory mechanism to curb the appropriation of agricultural land.

The issue of compensation too cannot be dealt with mechanically. It is often determined with regard to determinants such as fertility of the land, location of the land viz. proximity to urban centres, the intended use of the land and the potential profits to be generated. Thus, the amount of compensation to be paid will vary according to these contextual factors and cannot be determined arbitrarily, and should also allow space for bargaining by the farmers. It is not that farmers do not want to part with their land, as a recent survey shows that 62% farmers want to move to better-paying employment. Then what is the problem? The central point is two-fold:

First, the valuation of land (or the corresponding compensation) may never really capture the actual meaning or relation of land with the people. This does not merely refer to the cultural attachments which are articulated during resistance movements, but to a more fundamental expression of insecurity arising from a flaw in the current development model. The current model of development in India has completely marginalized the agricultural economy and fails to provide conditions of mobility to ensure employment in the dominant service economy. Thus, even when majority of farmers do not want to remain engaged in the occupation of farming or have their offspring follow this path, this kind of subsistence farming, in several major states of the country, acts as a source of survival,

livelihood and insurance which cannot easily be given up in exchange for a certain amount of compensation no matter how high, in the absence of a viable livelihood alternative. Such an alternative has not been provided in our imported development model and the prevalent idea of land acquisition is precisely a part of this unquestioned development model spanning the entire political spectrum, from the Congress to the BJP.

Second, the problem before us is not simply to change the existing laws, but to establish the right and dynamic institutions which can permanently provide groundwork for solving the miseries of the farming community. In order to ensure this, three issues must be taken note of:

- *Providing the right amount of monetary compensation:* Admittedly, in the existing law, the compensation provided was changed to four times the market value of the land in case of rural land and twice the market value in case of urban land. Yet, given the deplorable condition of our agricultural sector, a case for more compensation can be supported. However, at the same time, we need to recognize that monetary compensation can only go so far, unless the broad problems of the land acquisition policy are tackled. Increasingly, displaced landowners are no longer satisfied with compensation but also demand a right to some part of the developed property.

- *The process by which such an amount is determined:* A proper institutional framework should be put in place such that the bargaining process between the farmers and the buyers or investors is not in itself an arbitrary one.

- *Ensuring that the compensation packages do not result in permanent displacement of the farmer:* This is the most critical point in the current land acquisition debate, having much wider implications, and one that is often missed. The manner in which the compensation package is determined should take into account the specific socio-cultural and economic context in any country and its states. Very often, the category of 'compensation' is taken for granted

in land acquisition debates. It is often assumed that there is a sharp divide between pro-poor compensation and pro-corporate acquisition, and once the right mode of compensation is decided the debate ends. However, the moral issue of doing justice is much more fundamental and goes beyond these sweeping economic categories. If compensation is to be just, then it should guarantee an end outcome which is assuredly as good as or better than the original situation of the landowning farmer. However, the current idea of merely providing monetary compensation, no matter how high the amount, does not guarantee such an outcome. Given the prevailing socio-cultural conditions in rural India, most of the farmers do not invest the compensation amount in income-generating assets. Instead, they are more likely to spend it on short-term plans or waste it altogether. In fact, the experience of operation of various Self Help Groups in rural areas shows precisely this kind of a spending pattern and inability to generate long-term income. Such conditions would morally result in a permanent displacement of the farmer despite the monetary compensation being awarded.

The problem is, clearly, a behavioural one and reflects the wide gap between the so-called slogan of 'development' and the reality on the ground which is full of fundamental exclusions. It is because of this that bringing in even a reformed land acquisition law – as was done by the UPA-II government in 2013 – will, in itself, not be sufficient, unless the institutions operating on the ground are also changed. How can these institutions on the ground, which shape behavioral interactions between landowners and the authorities and the investors as well as among the farming community itself, be changed? The most dominant practical proposition that has emerged is to strengthen the role of the NGOs and activists who can represent the interests of the uninformed farmers and can not only bargain on their behalf but also create institutional establishments to ensure that they invest their monetary awards in income-generating assets. However, the assumption here is that NGOs and other such organizations are fool-proof and are truly representative of the farmers' interests. That is clearly not the case. Numerous such

experiments continue to take place in different states and have ended in disastrous failures, as these developmental NGOs are themselves not above corruption and lack of transparency. A more long term solution to tackle the deteriorating rural reality would be to promote skill-development and capacity-building programmes on a large-scale and in an effective manner. The government is already investing resources in such programmes and is even entering into partnerships with private foundations to promote it more effectively.

For the present, this may be a viable alternative. Such behavioral changes at the ground level may certainly result in more conscious and effective modes of generating long-term income and livelihood, so that compensation out of land acquisition for development does not remain merely an ineffective formality on paper. However, this should not delude us into thinking that such solutions can provide a model for long-term change.

A real alternative can emerge only by, first and foremost, recognizing the transitional nature of our ideas of development, democracy, institutions and social change, within which we have been circumscribed for far too long. The problem is not simply that we have been shaped by imported Western understandings of social change/behavior and development and the problems that accompany them, but we have also shaped our self-understandings and collective action in accordance with such an understanding. The major policy assumptions of the land acquisition question, including assumptions by NGOs and the state alike, of how farmers will behave and what they would 'rationally' expect, has been framed by a very limited understanding of collective action, which has ended up producing major social conflicts that cannot be cured by merely providing a one-time compensation. Instead of blindly borrowing the idea of eminent domain (necessity of state intervention) and imposing its top-down logic on the Indian society without the requisite transformation in other socio-economic conditions and a blind reliance of law as an instrument of bringing about change, new institutional alternatives need to be explored in the light of India's own experiences and conditions.

THE HISTORY OF SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS AND THE BORDER DISPUTE BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES (5)

III. THE POST-INDEPENDENCE RELATIONS BETWEEN INDIA AND CHINA FROM 1947 TO THE PRESENT

This section is divided into four sub-sectors, namely: (A) The Period from 1947 to 1954, (B) The Period from 1955 to 1961, (C) The Years 1962 and 1963, (D) The Period from 1964 to the Present and the Conclusions.

(A) *The Period from 1947 to 1954*

1. *Sino-Indian Relations, 1947-1950*

The first communication of the Government of Independent India to the Tibetan Government was a request to the latter to ratify the Simla Convention of 1913-1914. New Delhi wrote to Lhasa in July 1947: "The Government of India would be glad to have an assurance that it is the intention of the Government of Tibet to continue relations on the existing basis until new arrangements are reached on matters that either party may wish to take up. This is the procedure adopted by all other countries with which India has inherited treaty relations from His Majesty's Government".¹

According to Richardson, the then British representation in Lhasa the Tibetan Government acknowledged the message but did not make any reply. According to him "the Tibetans were claiming the 'lost territories of Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Arunachal Pradesh and certain parts of Ladakh before ratifying any treaty.'"² This act of Tibet "... made the newly independent Indian Government suspicious of their intention, and this at a time when Tibet needed all its potential friends.

This was in fact one of the most preposterous actions of the Tibetan Government and even now, more than fifty years later, the only excuse one can think of is that the Tibetan Kashag and National Assembly were totally inexperienced in dealing with foreign policy matters. It was not without reason that Jawaharlal Nehru and other

officials were very displeased with the Tibetans.

It is difficult to say today whether it would have made a difference, but it is certain that the only wise course for the Tibetan Government would have been to answer Delhi's note immediately. The Tibetan Government should have reasserted its adherence to the Simla Convention and other treaties, accepted the Indian Government as the successor to the British and requested Delhi to hold negotiations on their 'lost' territories."³

It took almost one year for Lhasa to accept India as the successor of the British India and thus causing much harm to themselves in the process. This delay and "this ill-advised claim [to lost Tibetan territories], made by the Tibetan Government resulted in the temporary loss of certain amount of Indian sympathy for Tibet."⁴

The Dalai Lama during an interview with Claude Arpi, the French-born Tibetologist when he was asked that had Kashag "not committed a great mistake by refusing to ratify the Simla Convention and bargaining instead for the return of some 'lost territories' to Tibet, he replied: 'Yes, it is my strong feeling. At that time the Tibetan Government should have send a strong delegation to celebrate the Independence of India. Of course that was a big mistake.'"⁵

On July 8, 1949, Chen, the acting head of the Chinese mission in Lhasa, was called by the Kashag and informed that he and his staff as well as all Chinese working in schools and hospitals had to leave Tibet. The Chinese were swiftly expelled by the Tibetan Government. Their bank accounts were frozen on the request of the Tibetan Government. The Indian Mission was later informed about the fait accompli. It was a complete surprise for the Indian Mission, Richardson commented later.

In 1947, when India became independent, the Nationalist Kuomintang government was in power in China and India established diplomatic relation with this government in 1948 and sent K.M. Panikkar as its first ambassador. Panikkar sent a note on 22nd November 1948, to the Government of India expressing his views on the then conditions of China and the likely emergence of a strong

Communist dictatorship which would organize a strong united China. According to him, "A China so organized will be in an extremely powerful position to claim its historic role of authority over Tibet, Burma, Indo-China and Siam. The historic claims in regard to these are vague and hazy, at different times China did exercise authority over Tibet, Burma, Tonkin and Annam and claimed suzerainty over Khmer kings of the present state of Siam."⁶

In the year 1949, Nehru was full of admiration for the Communist regime as it was rapidly taking over the country from the hands of the Kuomintang whose final defeat led to the establishment of the Peoples Republic of China on October 1st, 1949. India welcomed this change over and on December 30, 1949 extended official recognition to the new regime and had the distinction of being the first non-communist country to do so.

While Nehru, inspite of the reservations of some Indian leaders like C. Rajagopalachari, was positively inclined towards the new regime in China, it took some time for the Communist leaders to accept India's stance of non-alignment which they strongly criticized on many occasions. At that time, Nehru, who strongly believed in Asia's resurgence looked upon Indian independence and the Chinese revolution as parallel expressions of it. Independent India also acknowledged, as the British had done, the suzerainty of China over Tibet with the latter constituting an autonomous unit of the Peoples Republic of China. Still, India was surprised and shocked when the Chinese army, numbering 40,000 troops, moved into some areas of Tibet on October 1st, 1950.

On 28th October, the following note from the Government of India was sent to the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs: "We have seen with regrets reports in newspapers of official statements made in Peking to the effect that 'People's Liberation Army units have been ordered to advance in Tibet.' We have received no intimation of it from your ambassador here or from our ambassador in Peking.

... The decision to order an advance of China's troops into Tibet appears to us most surprising and regrettable. ...The Government

of India can only express its deep regret that in spite of the friendly and disinterested advice repeatedly tendered by them, the Chinese Government should have decided to seek a solution of the problem of their relations with Tibet by force instead by the slower and more enduring method of peaceful approach.

... Now that the invasion of Tibet had been ordered by the Chinese Government, peaceful negotiations can hardly be synchronized with it and there naturally will be fear on the part of the Tibetans that negotiations will be under duress. In the present context of world events, invasion by the Chinese troops in Tibet cannot but be regarded as deplorable and in the considered judgement of the Government, not in the interest of China or Peace.”⁷

Two days later, Zhou Enlai replied, “The Central People’s Republic of China would like to make it clear: Tibet is an integral part of the Chinese territory and the problem of Tibet is entirely domestic problem of China. The Chinese People’s Liberation Army must enter Tibet, liberate the Tibetan people, and defend the frontiers of China. This is the resolved policy of the Central People’s Government.

...Therefore, with regard to the point of view of the Government of India on what it regards as deplorable, the Central People’s Government of China cannot but consider it as having been affected by the foreign influences hostile to China in Tibet and hence expresses its deep regret.”⁸

“During the last days of October, 1950, Lhasa sent feelers to Delhi to see if India would be ready to sponsor the Tibetan appeal to UN. ...India’s reply was that it would certainly support an appeal from Tibet, but would not like to sponsor it. ...Till mid-November the position of the Government of India was clear: India would support the Tibetan case if raised by any other nation. Then India began to vacillate.”⁹

In the light of the above happenings, Sardar Patel, the then Home Minister, wrote the famous letter of foresight to Nehru, the then Prime Minister of India.

“My dear Jawaharlal,

Ever since my return from Ahmedabad and after the cabinet meeting the same day which I had to attend at practically fifteen minutes’ notice and for which I regret I was not able to read all the papers, I have been anxiously thinking over the problem of Tibet and I thought I should share with you what is passing through my mind.

I have carefully gone through the correspondence between the External Affairs Ministry and our Ambassador in Peking and through him the Chinese Government. I have tried to peruse this correspondence as favourably to our Ambassador and the Chinese Government as possible, but I regret to say that neither of them comes out well as a result of this study. The Chinese Government has tried to delude us by professions of peaceful intention. My own feeling is that at a crucial period they managed to instil into our Ambassador a false sense of confidence in their so-called desire to settle the Tibetan problem by peaceful means. There can be no doubt that during the period covered by this correspondence the Chinese must have been concentrating for an onslaught on Tibet. The final action of the Chinese, in my judgement, is little short of perfidy. The tragedy of it is that the Tibetans put faith in us; they chose to be guided by us; and we have been unable to get them out of the meshes of Chinese diplomacy or Chinese malevolence. From the latest position, it appears that we shall not be able to rescue the Dalai Lama. Our Ambassador has been at great pains to find an explanation or justification for Chinese policy and actions. As the External Affairs Ministry remarked in one of their telegrams, there was a lack of firmness and unnecessary apology in one or two representations that he made to the Chinese Government on our behalf. It is impossible to imagine any sensible person believing in the so-called threat to China from Anglo-American machinations in Tibet. Therefore, if the Chinese put faith in this, they must have distrusted us so completely as to have taken us as tools or stooges of Anglo-American diplomacy or strategy. This feeling, if genuinely entertained by the Chinese in spite of your direct approaches to

them, indicates that even though we regard ourselves as the friends of China, the Chinese do not regard us as their friends. With the Communist mentality of “whoever is not with them being against them”, this is a significant pointer, of which we have to take due note. During the last several months, outside the Russian camp, we have practically been alone in championing the cause of Chinese entry into UN and in securing from the Americans assurances on the question of Formosa. We have done everything we could to assuage Chinese feelings, to allay its apprehensions and to defend its legitimate claims in our discussions and correspondence with America and Britain and in the UN. In spite of this, China is not convinced about our disinterestedness; it continues to regard us with suspicion and the whole psychology is one, at least outwardly, of scepticism perhaps mixed with a little hostility. I doubt if we can go any further than we have done already to convince China of our good intentions, friendliness and goodwill. In Peking we have an Ambassador who is eminently suitable for putting across the friendly point of view. Even he seems to have failed to convert the Chinese. Their last telegram to us is an act of gross discourtesy not only in the summary way it disposes of our protest against the entry of Chinese forces into Tibet but also in the wild insinuation that our attitude is determined by foreign influences. It looks as though it is not a friend speaking in that language but a potential enemy.

In the background of this, we have to consider what new situation now faces us as a result of the disappearance of Tibet, as we knew it, and the expansion of China almost up to our gates. Throughout history we have seldom been worried about our north-east frontier. The Himalayas have been regarded as an impenetrable barrier against any threat from the north. We had a friendly Tibet which gave us no trouble. The Chinese were divided. They had their own domestic problems and never bothered us about frontiers. In 1914, we entered into a convention with Tibet which was not endorsed by the Chinese. We seem to have regarded Tibetan autonomy as extending to independent treaty relationship. Presumably, all that we required was Chinese counter-signature. The

Chinese interpretation of suzerainty seems to be different. We can, therefore, safely assume that very soon they will disown all the stipulations which Tibet has entered into with us in the past. That throws into the melting pot all frontier and commercial settlements with Tibet on which we have been functioning and acting during the last half a century. China is no longer divided. It is united and strong. All along the Himalayas in the north and north-east, we have on our side of the frontier a population ethnologically and culturally not different from Tibetans and Mongoloids. The undefined state of the frontier and the existence on our side of a population with its affinities to the Tibetans or Chinese have all the elements of the potential trouble between China and ourselves. Recent and bitter history also tells us that Communism is no shield against imperialism and that the communists are as good or as bad imperialists as any other. Chinese ambitions in this respect not only cover the Himalayan slopes on our side but also include the important part of Assam. They have their ambitions in Burma also. Burma has the added difficulty that it has no McMahon Line round which to build up even the semblance of an agreement. Chinese irredentism and communist imperialism are different from the expansionism or imperialism of the western powers. The former has a cloak of ideology which makes it ten times more dangerous. In the guise of ideological expansion lie concealed racial, national or historical claims. The danger from the north and north-east, therefore, becomes both communist and imperialist. While our western and north-western threat to security is still as prominent as before, a new threat has developed from the north and north-east. Thus, for the first time, after centuries, India's defence has to concentrate itself on two fronts simultaneously. Our defence measures have so far been based on the calculations of superiority over Pakistan. In our calculations we shall now have to reckon with communist China in the north and in the north-east, a communist China which has definite ambitions and aims and which does not, in any way, seem friendly disposed towards us.

Let us also consider the political conditions on this potentially troublesome frontier. Our northern and north-eastern approaches

consist of Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, Darjeeling and the tribal areas in Assam. From the point of view of communication, there are weak spots. Continuous defensive lines do not exist. There is almost an unlimited scope for infiltration. Police protection is limited to a very small number of passes. There, too, our outposts do not seem to be fully manned. The contact of these areas with us is by no means close and intimate. The people inhabiting these portions have no established loyalty or devotion to India. Even Darjeeling and Kalimpong areas are not free from pro-Mongoloid prejudices. During the last three years, we have not been able to make any appreciable approaches to the Nagas and other hill tribes in Assam. European missionaries and other visitors had been in touch with them, but their influence was in no way friendly to India or Indians. In Sikkim, there was political ferment some time ago. It is quite possible that discontent is smouldering there. Bhutan is comparatively quiet, but its affinity with Tibetans would be a handicap. Nepal has a weak oligarchic regime based almost entirely on force: it is in conflict with a turbulent element of the population as well as with enlightened ideas of the modern age. In these circumstances, to make people alive to the new danger or to make them defensively strong is a very difficult task indeed and that difficulty can be got over only by enlightened firmness, strength and a clear line of policy. I am sure the Chinese and their source of inspiration, Soviet Union, would not miss any opportunity of exploiting these weak spots, partly in support of their ideology and partly in support of their ambitions. In my judgement the situation is one which we cannot afford either to be complacent or to be vacillating. We must have a clear idea of what we wish to achieve and also of the methods by which we should achieve it. Any faltering or lack of decisiveness in formulating our objectives or in pursuing our policies to attain those objectives is bound to weaken us and increase the threats which are so evident.

Side by side with these external dangers, we shall now have to face serious internal problems as well. I have already asked Lengar to send to the External Affairs Ministry a copy of the Intelligence Bureau's appreciation of these matters. Hitherto, the Communist

Party of India has found some difficulty in contacting communists abroad, or in getting supplies of arms, literature, etc., from them. They had to contend with the difficult Burmese and Pakistan frontiers on the east or with the long seaboard. They shall now have a comparatively easy means of access to Chinese communists and through them to other foreign communists. Infiltration of spies, fifth columnists and communists would now be easier. Instead of having to deal with isolated communist pockets in Telengana and Warrangal we may have to deal with communist threats to our security along our northern and north-eastern frontiers, where, for supplies of arms and ammunition, they can safely depend on communist arsenals in China. The whole situation thus raises a number of problems on which we must come to an early decision so that we can, as I said earlier, formulate the objectives of our policy and decide the method by which those objectives are to be attained. It is also clear that the action will have to be fairly comprehensive, involving not only our defence strategy and state of preparations but also problem of internal security to deal with which we have not a moment to lose. We shall also have to deal with administrative and political problems in the weak spots along the frontier to which I have already referred.

It is of course, impossible to be exhaustive in setting out all these problems. I am, however, giving below some of the problems which, in my opinion, require early solution and round which we have to build our administrative or military policies and measures to implement them.

a) A military and intelligence appreciation of the Chinese threat to India both on the frontier and to internal security.

b) An examination of military position and such redistribution of our forces as might be necessary, particularly with the idea of guarding important routes or areas which are likely to be the subject of dispute.

c) An appraisal of the strength of our forces and, if necessary, reconsideration of our retrenchment plans for the Army in the light of the new threat.

d) A long-term consideration of our defence needs. My own feeling is that, unless we assure our supplies of arms, ammunition and armour, we would be making our defence perpetually weak and we would not be able to stand up to the double threat of difficulties both from the west and north-west and north and north-east.

e) The question of China's entry into the UN. In view of the rebuff which China has given us and the method which it has followed in dealing with Tibet, I am doubtful whether we can advocate its claim any longer. There would probably be a threat in the UN virtually to outlaw China, in view of its active participation in the Korean war. We must determine our attitude on this question also.

f) The political and administrative steps which we should take to strengthen our northern and north-eastern frontier. This would include the whole of the border, ie. Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, Darjeeling and the tribal territory in Assam.

g) Measures of internal security in the border areas as well as the states flanking those areas such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Bengal and Assam.

h) Improvement of our communication, road, rail, air and wireless, in these areas and with the frontier outposts.

i) The future of our mission at Lhasa and the trade posts at Gyantse and Yatung and the forces which we have in operation in Tibet to guard the trade routes.

j) The policy in regard to the McMahon Line.

These are some of the questions which occur to my mind. It is possible that a consideration of these matters may lead us into wider question of our relationship with China, Russia, America, Britain and Burma. This, however, would be of a general nature, though some might be basically very important, e.g., we might have to consider whether we should not enter into closer association with Burma in order to strengthen the latter in its dealings with China. I do not rule out the possibility that, before applying pressure on us, China might apply pressure on Burma. With Burma, the frontier is entirely

undefined and the Chinese territorial claims are more substantial. In its present position, Burma might offer an easier problem to China, and therefore, might claim its first attention.

I suggest that we meet early to have a general discussion on these problems and decide on such steps as we might think to be immediately necessary and direct, quick examination of other problems with a view to taking early measures to deal with them.

Vallabhbhai Patel,
7th November 1950¹⁰

In response to this Nehru wrote a note on China dated 18th November 1950. The note was forwarded to Sardar Patel as it answered matters raised by Sardar in his letter to Nehru.

1. The Chinese Government having replied to our last note, we have to consider what further steps we should take in this matter. There is no immediate hurry about sending a reply to the Chinese Government. But we have to send immediate instructions to Shri B.N. Rau as to what he should do in the event of Tibet's appeal being brought up before the Security Council or the General Assembly.

2. The content of the Chinese reply is much the same as their previous notes, but there does appear to be a toning down and an attempt at some kind of a friendly approach.

3. It is interesting to note that they have not referred specifically to our mission at Lhasa or to our trade agents or military escort at Yangtse, etc. We had mentioned these especially in our last note. There is an indirect reference, however, in China's note. At the end, this note says that 'as long as our two sides adhere strictly to the principle of mutual respect for territory, sovereignty, equality and mutual benefit, we are convinced that the friendship between China and India should be developed in a normal way, and that problems relating to Sino-Indian diplomatic, commercial and cultural relations with respect to Tibet may be solved properly and to our mutual benefit through normal diplomatic channels.' This clearly refers to

our trade agents and others in Tibet. We had expected a demand from them for the withdrawal of these agents, etc. The fact that they have not done so has some significance.

4. Stress is laid in China's note on Chinese sovereignty over Tibet, which, we are reminded, we have acknowledged, on Tibet being an integral part of China's territory and therefore a domestic problem. It is however again repeated that outside influences have been at play obstructing China's mission in Tibet: In fact, it is stated that liberation of Changtu proves that foreign forces and influences were inciting Tibetan troops to resist. It is again repeated that no foreign intervention will be permitted and that the Chinese Army will proceed.

5. All this is much the same as has been said before, but it is said in somewhat different way and there are repeated references in the note to China desiring the friendship of India.

6. It is true that in one of our messages to the Chinese Government we used 'sovereignty' of China in relation to Tibet. In our last message we used the word, 'suzerainty'. After receipt of China's last note, we have pointed out to our Ambassador that suzerainty was the right word and that "sovereignty" had been used by error.

7. It is easy to draft a reply to the Chinese note, pressing our viewpoint and countering some of the arguments raised in the Chinese note. But, before we do so, we should be clear in our own mind as to what we are aiming at, not only in the immediate future but from a long-term view. It is important that we keep both these viewpoints before us. In all probability China, that is, present-day China is going to be our close neighbour for a long time to come. We are going to have a tremendously long common frontier. It is unlikely, and it would be unwise to expect that the present Chinese Government will collapse, giving place to another. Therefore, it is important to pursue a policy which will be in keeping with this long-term view.

8. I think it may be taken for granted that China will take

possession, in a political sense at least, of the whole of Tibet. There is no likelihood whatever of Tibet being able to resist this or stop it. It is equally unlikely that any foreign Power can prevent it. We cannot do so. If so, what can we do to help in the maintenance of Tibetan autonomy and at the same time avoiding continuous tension and apprehension on our frontiers?

9. The Chinese note has repeated that they wish the Tibetan people to have, what they call, 'regional autonomy and religious freedom'. This autonomy can obviously not be anything like the autonomy, verging on independence, which Tibet has enjoyed during the last forty years or so. But it is reasonable to assume from the very nature of Tibetan geography, refrain and climate, that a large measure of autonomy is almost inevitable. It may of course be that this autonomous Tibet is controlled by communist elements in Tibet. I imagine however that it is, on the whole, more likely that what will be attempted will be a pro-Communist China administration rather than a communist one.

10. If world war comes, then all kinds of difficult and intricate problems arise and each one of these problems will be inter-related with others. Even the question of defence of India assumes a different shape and cannot be isolated from other world factors. I think that it is exceedingly unlikely that we may have to face any real military invasion from the Chinese side, whether in peace or in war, in the foreseeable future. I base this conclusion on a consideration of various world factors. In peace, such an invasion would undoubtedly lead to world war. China, though internally big, is in a way amorphous and easily capable of being attacked, on its sea coasts and by air. In such a war, China would have its main front in the south and east and it will be fighting for its very existence against powerful enemies. It is inconceivable that it should divert its forces and its strength across the inhospitable terrain of Tibet and undertake a wild adventure across the Himalayas. Any such attempt will greatly weaken its capacity to meet its real enemies on other fronts. Thus I rule out any major attack on India by China. I think these considerations should be borne in mind, because there is far too

much loose talk about China attacking and overrunning India. If we lose our sense of perspective and world strategy and give way to unreasoning fears, then any policy that we might have is likely to fail.

11. While there is, in my opinion, practically no chance of a major attack on India by China, there are certainly chances of gradual infiltration across our border and possibly of entering and taking possession of disputed territory, if there is no obstruction to this happening. We must therefore take all necessary precautions to prevent this. But, again, we must differentiate between these precautions and those that might be necessary to meet a real attack.

12. If we really feared an attack and had to make full provision for it, this would cast an intolerable burden on us, financial and otherwise, and it would weaken our general defence position. There are limits beyond which we cannot go at least for some years, and a spreading out of our army in distant frontiers would be bad from every military or strategic point of view.

13. In spite of our desire to settle any points at issue between us and Pakistan, and developing peaceful relations with it, the fact remains that our major possible enemy is Pakistan. This has compelled us to think of our defence mainly in terms of Pakistan's aggression. If we begin to think of and prepare for China's aggression in the same way, we would weaken considerably on the Pakistan side. We might well be got in a pincer movement. It is interesting to note that Pakistan is taking a great deal of interest, from this Point of view in developments in Tibet. Indeed it has been discussed in the Pakistan press that the new danger from Tibet to India might help them to settle the Kashmir problem according to their wishes. Pakistan has absolutely nothing in common with China or Tibet. But if we fall out completely with China, Pakistan will undoubtedly try to take advantage of this, politically or otherwise. The position of India thus will be bad from a defence point of view. We cannot have all the time two possible enemies on either side of India. This danger will not be got over, even if we increase our defence forces or even

if other foreign countries help us in arming. The measure of safety that one gets by increasing the defence apparatus is limited by many factors. But whatever that measure of safety might be, strategically we would be in an unsound position and the burden of this will be very great on us. As it is, we are facing enormous difficulties, financial, economic, etc.

14. The idea that communism inevitably means expansion and war, or, to put it more precisely, that Chinese communism means inevitably an expansion towards India, is rather naive. It may mean that in certain circumstances. Those circumstances would depend upon many factors, which I need not go into here. The danger really is not from military invasion but from infiltration of men and ideas. The ideas are there already and can only be countered by other ideas. Communism is an important element in the situation. But, by our attaching too great importance to it in this context, we are likely to misjudge the situation from other and more important angles.

15. In a long-term view, India and China are two of the biggest countries of Asia bordering on each other and both with certain expansive tendencies, because of their vitality. If their relations are bad, this will have a serious effect not only on both of them but on Asia as a whole. It would affect our future for a long time. If a position arises in which China and India are inveterately hostile to each other, like France and Germany, then there will be repeated wars bringing destruction to both. The advantage will go to other countries. It is interesting to note that both the U.K. and the U.S.A. appear to be anxious to add to the unfriendliness of India and China towards each other. It is also interesting to find that the USSR does not view with favour any friendly relations between India and China. These are long-term reactions which one can fully understand because India and China at peace with each other would make a vast difference to the whole set-up and balance of the world. Much of course depends upon the development of either country and how far communism in China will mould the Chinese people. Even so, these processes are long-range ones and in the long run it is fairly safe to assume that hundreds of millions of people will not change their essential

characteristics.

16. These arguments lead to the conclusion that while we should be prepared, to the best of our ability, for all contingencies, the real protection that we should seek is some kind of understanding of China. If we have not got that, then both our present and our future are imperilled and no distant Power can save us. I think on the whole that China desires this too for obvious reasons. If this is so, then we should fashion our present policy accordingly.

17. We cannot save Tibet, as we should have liked to do, and our very attempts to save it might well bring greater trouble to it. It would be unfair to Tibet for us to bring this trouble upon her without having the capacity to help her effectively. It may be possible, however, that we might be able to help Tibet to retain a large measure of her autonomy. That would be good for Tibet and good for India. As far as I can see, this can only be done on the diplomatic level and by avoidance of making the present tension between India and China worse.

18. What then should be our instructions to B.N. Rau? From the messages he has sent us, it appears that no member of the Security Council shows any inclination to sponsor Tibet's appeal and that there is little likelihood of the matter being considered by the Council. We have said that we are not going to sponsor this appeal, but if it comes up, we shall state our viewpoint. This viewpoint cannot be one of full support of the Tibetan appeal, because that goes far and claims full independence. We may say that whatever might have been acknowledged in the past about China's sovereignty or suzerainty, recent events have deprived China of the right to claim that. There may be some moral basis for this argument. But it will not take us or Tibet very far. It will only hasten the downfall of Tibet. No outsider will be able to help her and China, suspicious and apprehensive of these tactics, will make sure of much speedier and fuller possession of Tibet than she might otherwise have done. We shall thus not only fail in our endeavour but at the same time have really a hostile China on our door-step.

19. I think that in no event should we sponsor Tibet's appeal. I would personally think that it would be a good thing if that appeal is not heard in the Security Council or the General Assembly. If it is considered there, there is bound to be a great deal of bitter speaking and accusation, which will worsen the situation as regards Tibet, as well as the possibility of widespread war, without helping it in the least. It must be remembered that neither the U.K. nor the U.S.A., nor indeed any other Power, is particularly interested in Tibet or the future of that country. What they are interested in is embarrassing China. Our interest, on the other hand, is Tibet, and if we cannot serve that interest, we fail.

20. Therefore, it will be better not to discuss Tibet's appeal in the UN. Suppose, however, that it comes up for discussion, in spite of our not wishing this, what then? I would suggest that our representative should state our case as moderately as possible and ask the Security Council or the Assembly to give expression to their desire that the Sino-Tibetan question should be settled peacefully and that Tibet's autonomy should be respected and maintained. Any particular reference to an Article of the Charter of the UN might tie us up in difficulties and lead to certain consequences later which may prove highly embarrassing for us. Or a resolution of the UN might just be a dead letter, which also will be bad.

21. If my general argument is approved then we can frame our reply to China's note accordingly.

J. Nehru

18 November 1950"¹¹

On November 20, 1950, Nehru stated in the Lok Shaba: "The McMahon Line is our boundary, map or no map. We will not allow anybody to come across that boundary."¹²

"...On November 24, at the request of the tiny State of El Salvador, the matter came up for discussion in the General Committee of the United Nations. India moved a motion for postponing the matter: Jam Saheb of Navangar, the Indian

representative declared: 'The Indian Government was certain that the Tibetan question could still be settled by peaceful means, and that such a settlement could safeguard the autonomy which Tibet enjoyed for several decade while maintaining its historical association with China.' The matter was adjourned. The noose had tightened on Tibet. The door of the United Nations had been closed."¹³

2. Sino-Indian Relations 1951-53

"On December 6, 1950, Nehru clarified that he was interested in Tibet's autonomy but without challenging China's suzerainty over it. He further said that Tibet was not in position to begin or continue the war and 'there is no threat from Tibet to China obviously'. India voted against a resolution, branding the People's Republic of China as an 'aggressor' in Korea, in General Assembly on February 1, 1951. And taking over of Tawang in the first week of February without any opposition from the Chinese was rightly regarded by the Government of India as indicating that China was psychologically prepared to accept the McMahon Line as the boundary. All this led to a further improvement in Sino-Indian relations during this period."¹⁴

Nehru stated in the Parliament on February 12th, 1951, that, "we were aggrieved at a certain turn of events in Tibet, but we did not allow that to affect our policy or our desire to maintain friendly relations with China. I am glad to say that our relations with the new China are friendly at present".¹⁵

The Government of India felt relieved from the tensions on the Tibetan situation when a 17-point agreement was signed between Tibetan authority and the Chinese Government on May 23rd, 1951. As result of this agreement Tibet formally became a province of China. According to the provisions of the Agreement it was renamed as the Tibetan Autonomous Region which would enjoy autonomy in its purely internal matters while the Chinese Government will exercise exclusive control over defence, communications and external affairs.

"Since 1951, there started an exchange of visits between India and China by goodwill and cultural missions, and this fostered mutual

understanding. There was a discernible conciliatory shift in China's attitude towards India, partly in response to India's constant friendly overtures and partly influenced by a subtle change in international communist tactics. The Chinese press started praising Nehru's statesmanship and spoke of India as a neutral and peace loving country. The Government of India welcomed the soft attitude adopted by the Chinese. India declined to attend a conference convened in San Francisco on September 8, 1951 to sign a peace treaty with Japan because, among other reasons, China was not a party to it.

On September 27, 1951, Chou En Lai informally assured the Indian ambassador, K M Panikkar at Beijing that China intended in every way to safeguard Indian interests in Tibet, adding that 'there was no territorial dispute or controversy between India and China.' India welcomed the new soft line in China's policy and resumed its endeavours to put Sino-Indian relations on a firm basis in a wider perspective."¹⁶

On November 3, 1951, when at a press conference someone raised the point of certain differences between India and China on the work of Indian Mission at Lhasa, Nehru remarked that the India mission would continue to function there. A few months later, at another press conference when this issue again came up Nehru pointed out that the Indian Mission was dealing with only certain trade and cultural matters and never really had any diplomatic status.

Since Tibet was no longer an independent entity in 1952, the Government of India decided to redesignate the Indian Representative in Lhasa as a Counsel-General. "In a letter to Nehru of 28 July, Zhou En Lai for the first time officially requested the 'regularisation' of the Indian Mission in Lhasa. While recognising the legitimacy of India's trade and cultural interests in Tibet, the Chinese Premier suggested that the political agency at Lhasa should be 'regularised by its transformation into an Indian Consulate-General in exchange for the opening of a similar Chinese Consulate in Bombay.'

When Sinha, the Indian representative in Lhasa, asked for a loan of Rs. 2 lakhs to help the forces fighting for Tibetan independence, Nehru clarified the policy of the Government of India vis-a-vis the Mission in Lhasa. In a cable to Sinha, he informed him that it would be 'improper and unwise for our representative to get involved in Tibetan domestic affairs or intrigues.' He added that India was naturally friendly towards Tibetans, but this should not give anyone the impression of possible interference or help. He concluded by telling his representative: 'We have to judge these matters from larger world point of view which probably our Tibetan friends have no means of appreciating.'¹⁷

Panikkar, the Indian ambassador in Peking was very friendly with the Chinese leadership. According to Claude Arpi, "Panikkar was increasingly enamoured of the Communist regime in Beijing. Zhou continued to speak of stabilization of the Indo-Tibetan border, but Panikkar chose to understand that there was no difference of opinion on the border and that both India and China agreed to the McMahan Line as well as the frontier in the central and western sectors in U.P. and Ladakh.

In his biography of Nehru, Dr. S. Gopal noted: 'this shrouded sentence [about the stabilization of the border] was not an explicit recognition of the frontier'. Other officials of the Ministry of External Affairs did not agree with Panikkar's optimistic views. A Note entitled *The Threat from Tibet* written in early October by Sir G.S. Bajpai, the Secretary-General of the Ministry of External affairs, had pointed out that 'though a large Chinese army or a Tibetan army under Chinese inspiration and leadership may not attempt an invasion of India, the possibility of small forces dribbling in through the numerous passes and then combining to make trouble for us cannot be and had not been ruled out'. However, Nehru did not believe in the possibility of a regular invasion of Nepal or India. He ruled it out 'even as a remote contingency'. He thought that: 'What might happen is some petty trouble in the borders and unarmed infiltration. To some extent this can be stopped by check posts...

Ultimately, however, armies do not stop communist infiltration or communist ideas... Any large expenditure on the army will starve the development of the country and social progress”¹⁸

At this time there was a very poor awareness of the Indo-Tibetan border even among the top Indian leadership. “For example, during a press conference on 14 January 1952, Nehru was asked: ‘Is there any implication of joint administration and joint defence [with Nepal] of the north-east border?’ After having explained that the McMahon Line had nothing to do with Nepal, Nehru continued: ‘The McMahon Line is the frontier, but this side of the McMahon Line there have been undeveloped territories-jungles, etc. You take ten days to a fortnight to reach the frontier from any administrative centre’. However when the journalist pointed out the north-west sector, the Prime Minister was less assured: ‘I do not know. The McMahon Line is a definition of that border on the north-east.’ But the journalist insisted: ‘There is a certain tract which is undefined so far – even on the maps it is shown as undefined – towards the north-east and north-west, between Nepal and the province of Kashmir: near Lake Manasarovar.’ Nehru answered ‘I do not know that any question had arisen; it has not come up before me at all at any time.’

And once again when the press pointed out ‘But even on the maps it is shown as an undefined border.’ Nehru could only say ‘Maybe. All these are high mountains. Nobody lives there. It is not very necessary to define these things.’¹⁹

“...in September 1952, S. Sinha, the Indian Representative in Lhasa wrote a long report; a very dismayed Nehru immediately answered his Representative in Tibet: ‘Your telegram is rather disturbing as it indicated that our policy is not fully understood. That policy is to recognize that Tibet is under Chinese suzerainty and, subject to that, to protect our own interests in Tibet. Otherwise, we do not wish to interfere in internal affairs of Tibet and we can certainly be no party to any secret or other activities against the Chinese. That would be both practically and morally wrong. It is for

Tibetans and Chinese to settle their problems.’ Nehru added: ‘We are naturally friendly towards Tibetans, as we have been in the past, but we must not give them any impression of possibility of interference or help.’

The note was titled: ‘Chinese Designs on the North East Frontier of India’. This Foreign Service office was warning his South Block bosses against the new danger on the Northern border. Nehru immediately sent the note to Panikkar for his comments.

Panikkar’s view was that the issue was ‘not one of Chinese, or Chinese-inspired military adventure against the border of India’, but he felt that India should be ‘developing settled conditions within India’s border, in areas where the administrative position was weak and the political position was only growing’. His suggestions which were to be followed by Nehru during the following years were to implement a policy of firm friendship to the people of the area, of non-interference in their social life and making available to them the advantages of modern developments. Nehru also held that India should take advantage of the contradictions in Chinese policy vis-à-vis Tibet. The meaning of this last intention is not clear as there was yet not much contradiction or even opposition to the Chinese policy in Tibet.

About Sinha’s note, Nehru wrote to Panikkar: ‘to talk about China’s designs itself indicated that he is not taking quite an objective view of the situation but has started with certain presumptions. I do not rule out the possibility of such developments in Tibet, on our border or elsewhere. But we must take a balanced view.’²⁰

“The occasion for Nehru to formulate his new Tibet and China policy came when in March 1953, S. Sinha who by the time had been transferred as the Officer on Special Duty in the Ministry of External Affairs, wrote a new note on the North-Eastern frontier situation. The note drew the attention of the Ministry to possible dangers on the border areas. It again greatly upset Nehru who contemptuously wrote: ‘It appears that Mr. Sinha does not appreciate our policy fully. He should be enlightened.’

...It is worth quoting Nehru's answer to Sinha's Report: 'I find Mr. Sinha's approach to be colored very much by certain ideas and conceptions which prevent him from taking an objective view of the situation. The note starts by reference to the lust for conquest of the Chinese and is throughout based on this. Mr. Sinha looks back with a certain nostalgia to the past when the British exercised a good deal of control over Tibet and he would have liked very much for India to take the place of the British of those days. As a matter of fact, the weakness of our position in Tibet has been that we are successors, to some extent, of an imperial power which had pushed its way into Tibet. When that imperial power has ceased to have any strength to function in the old way, it is patent that we cannot do so, even if we so wished. We do not, in fact, wish to do so in that particular way. What we are really interested in is our own security maintenance of our frontiers.

It serves little purpose to think regretfully of past days and past ways. That is only done by people who have been pushed aside by the advance of history and who can only think of the past when they played an important role in the historic process. The biggest event since the last War is the rise of Communist China. It is totally immaterial whether we like it or dislike it. It is a fact. It followed naturally that a strong Chinese Government had done with more or less success. It followed also that there was no power, however big, which could resist that claim in Tibet. Certainly we could not do so. To take up an attitude of resistance without the strength to follow it up would have been political folly of the first magnitude. Therefore, we had to accept the changes that took place. We shall have to accept any other changes internal to Tibet. But one thing we are not prepared to accept is any modification of or intrusion across our frontiers. Therefore, we must concentrate on that and not think vaguely of other matters.

While there is much in Mr. Sinha's report that has a basis of truth, this is put forward in such an exaggerated and emotional way that it loses force... That does not help in understanding a situation.'"²¹

In September 1953, Nehru wrote a letter to Chou En-lai where he expressed India's desire to open negotiations with China on bilateral issues. After consultation between the foreign affairs officials of both countries it was resolved that the negotiations should begin immediately.

G.S. Bajpai, the Secretary General in the Ministry of External Affairs had strongly advised that India should force Beijing to recognize the traditional boundary between India and Tibet which he thought was the only way to resolve all outstanding issues between India and China. Panikkar, the former Indian ambassador to China had, on the other hand, advised Nehru not to raise the border issue with the Chinese. Nehru accepted Panikkar's views and ruled that the border issue should not be discussed with China.

In early December R.N. Pillai, the Secretary General of the Ministry of External Affairs put up a Note in which he listed the following main points for discussions with China in the forthcoming meeting of the officials in Beijing:

- “1. The question of India's frontier with Tibet,
2. Indo-Tibetan trade and trade agencies,
3. Freedom of movement of Indian and Tibetan traders and pilgrims,
4. Passports and visas,
5. Telegraph, post office and hospitals,
6. Security guards and escorts, and
7. Special position of Bhutan.”²²

Nehru's response to the Note was, “We should not raise this question. If the Chinese raise it, we should express our surprise and point out that this is a settled issue. Further, during the last two years or so, when reference was frequently made about Indo-China or Indo-Tibetan problems, there has never been any reference to this frontier issue and it is surprising that this should be brought up now. Our delegation cannot discuss it.”²³

3. The Year of Panchsheel – 1954

Negotiations between the representative of Indian and Chinese governments began in Beijing on December 31st, 1953. It was expected to last only for five to six weeks but dragged on for almost four months. “Contrary to the Indian approach towards these negotiations, China attached great importance to its ‘first ever negotiations with a non-socialist country’ and set up an eleven member ‘Commission for Sino-Indian negotiations.’ Nehru had already expressed his desire to waive off any claim in Tibet as being not in keeping with full sovereignty of China, and to maintain trade relations with Tibet in cooperation with China. As China declared Sinkiang a closed area, India had also agreed to drop the Kashgar consulate from the agenda of the forthcoming talks, despite its earlier hopes of reopening the trade routes between Kashmir and Sinkiang through Ladakh. Even while the negotiations were going on, some members expressed their distrust of the Chinese motives and urged the adoption of a ‘more positive policy’. Nehru assured the House that the Government was fully aware of the need for maintaining the country’s security and that McMahon Line was India’s boundary and there was no question of discussing it with any country.”²⁴

The “Sino-Indian Agreement on Trade and Intercourse between India and the Tibet Region of China”, popularly called the Panchsheel Agreement, was signed on April 29, 1954. The main points of the Agreement were:

- “1. As per the title, Tibet becomes a ‘Region of China’.
2. The Five Principles or Panchsheel.
3. Recognition of the six (border) passes in the middle Sector.
4. Establishment of consulates (for India in Lhasa and Shanghai, for China in Calcutta and Bombay).
5. Setting up of trade agencies (for India at Yatung, Gyantse and Gartok and for China at New Delhi, Calcutta and Kalimpong).
6. Establishment of ten trade marts in Tibet for customary petty border trade by Indian traders.

7. Facilitating entry and ensuring security of Indian and Tibetan pilgrims to each other's holy shrines (Bodh Gaya, Sarnath and Sanchi in India; Kailash, Mansarowar and Lhasa in Tibet)."²⁵

The Five Principles (Panchsheel) were:

1. Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty;
2. Mutual non-aggression;
3. Mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs;
4. Equality and mutual benefit; and
5. Peaceful co-existence.

On May 1954, Nehru summarised his thinking on Panchsheel Agreement in a note to the officials in the Ministry of External Affairs as follows: "The Agreement between India and China on Tibet should be communicated formally to the Commonwealth countries. With that Agreement there should be a note mentioning our old connection with Tibet and the necessity that arose to make fresh adjustments in view of the recent changes in Tibet. Petty difficulties were cropping up in regard to trade, pilgrimage and other matters. These talks between the two Governments were, therefore, suggested by the Government of India and accepted by the Government of China. After prolonged discussions in Peking between the representatives of the two Governments, the Agreement was signed. This Agreement not only settles these various points in regard to Tibet which have been troubling us during the last two years or so, but also we hope will have a stabilising effect over this region, as well as, we think, to some extent, in Asian affairs."²⁶

On May 15, 1954, Nehru presented the Agreement to the Indian Parliament. After reading the preamble he commented on its implications for Tibet in the following words: "So far as Tibet is concerned, it is a recognition of the existing situation there. In fact, that situation had been recognised by us two or three years ago. ...It is true that occasionally when China was weak, this sovereignty was not exercised in any large measure. When China was strong, it

was exercised. Always there was a large measure of autonomy of Tibet, so that there was no great change in the theoretical approach to the Tibetan problem from the Chinese side. It has been throughout the last 200 or 300 years the same. The only country that had more intimate relations with Tibet was India, that is to say, British India in those days. Even then, when it was British policy to have some measure of influence over Tibet, even then they never denied the fact of Chinese sovereignty over Tibet, although in practice it was hardly exercised and they laid stress on Tibetan autonomy. Recent events made some other changes, factual changes, because a strong Chinese State gave practical evidence of exercising that sovereignty. So that what we have done in this agreement is not to recognise any new thing, but merely to repeat what we have said previously, and what, in fact, inevitably follows from the circumstances, both historical and practical, today.”²⁷

Parliamentary and public reaction to the 1954 treaty was generally favourable but not without opposition from some quarters. An opposition leader in the Lok Shaba, Acharya Kripalani, had strong reservations about it and later described this treaty as being “born in sin because it was enunciated to put the seal of our approval upon the destruction of an ancient nation which was associated with us spiritually and culturally.”²⁸

In the Rajya Shaba, Dr. Ambedkar remarked that, “By allowing the Chinese to take possession of Lhasa, the Prime Minister has practically helped them bring their border down to the Indian border... Aggression might well be committed by people who are always in the habit of committing aggression.”²⁹

The agreement between India and China thus gave strong signals to other Asian countries that the China indeed could coexist peacefully with its neighbours. It was for the first time that China through negotiations made a capitalist country to give up its privileges in China. It exhibited the independent foreign policy and new diplomatic approach of New China on all fronts including the negotiation policy, negotiation skills and the spirit of resolving the

jittery problems through consultations. The agreement between India and China, on Tibet certainly contributed a great deal towards the improvement of relations between the two countries.

The Geneva Conference was held in Geneva, Switzerland, from April 26 to July 20, 1954 between different nations to attempt to find a way to settle outstanding issues on the Korean peninsula and discuss the possibility of restoring peace in Indo-China. The Soviet Union, the United States, France, the United Kingdom, and the People's Republic of China were participants throughout the whole conference while different countries concerned were also invited to this conference. From this conference India and China emerged as countries of decisive importance in the context of world politics in general and Asian affairs in particular. In Geneva, India was represented by Krishna Menon who extended an invitation to Chou En-Lai to visit India. "Chou took time off from Geneva Conference and visited India for the first time from June 25-29, 1954. The Chinese premier was given a rousing welcome and slogans of 'Hindi-Chini Bhai-Bhai' (Indians and Chinese are brothers) generated a temporary euphoria about China. Chou had cleverly timed his visit to India with deliberate finesse. Pointing out that no solution of any international problem, an Asian problem in particular, would be possible without the participation of the China; Premier Chou had mooted the suggestion for an Asian consultative Committee to which Nehru showed no interest.

Intoxicated by the agenda of world peace, the Indian leadership did not raise the crucial issues that existed between India and China, instead harped on Panchsheel throughout. Chou also proposed to Nehru that by adhering to the Panchsheel, India and China should set an example for the world, providing that countries can coexist peacefully. On June 28, both the Prime Ministers issued a joint statement that reaffirmed their faith in Panchsheel. Both propounded that India and China would not only build their relationship with Asian countries on the basis of these principles but would also use these as basis for developing relations with other countries of the world. Before his departure, Chou invited Nehru to visit China."³⁰

4. An Egregious Blunder – the Root of an Excruciatingly Painful National Humiliation and a Disastrous Period in Sino-Indian Relations

On July 1st, 1954, Nehru wrote to the Ministry of External Affairs, “ordering the withdrawal of ‘all our old maps dealing with the frontier – new maps should be printed showing our Northern and North-Eastern frontier’; that is, both the McMahon Line in the eastern sector as well as a new line for the frontier for the western sector in Kashmir. ‘These new maps should also not state that there is any undemarcated territory.’ The maps attached to the two White Papers on Indian States, published by Sardar Patel’s Ministry of States in 1948 and 1950, bore the legend ‘boundary undefined’ for this sector while depicting the McMahon Line. The contrast was glaring. ...Nehru added: ‘This frontier should be considered a firm and definite one which is not open to discussion with anyone.’”³¹ This new line drawn in the Western Sector coincided with the Johnson Line – the farthestmost claim ever entertained by the British – and not the Macartney-MacDonald Line which the British had proposed to China in 1899 and which was not rejected (or accepted) by the then Chinese government.

In 1951 K. Zachariah was the Director of The Ministry of External Affairs’ Historical Division. “Under his supervision the Historical Division had prepared in 1951 a comprehensive and objective paper entitled “Studies on the Northern Frontier” based on the archives. It discussed the history and circumstances in which different lines of frontier were suggested. The paper is still kept secret, though the public has a right to its disclosure under the Right to Information Act. On March 24, 1953, a decision was taken to formulate a new line for the boundary. Nehru’s directive of July 1, 1954, followed.”³²

The above act of Nehru, followed by his refusal to negotiate on the border issue inspite of repeated requests and personal attempts by Chou En-Lai, was the single most important factor at the root of all the most painful happenings – which were further exacerbated by the persistent pursuit of the utterly foolish

“Forward Policy” – that the country had to endure during the following decade. Actually, the above act constituted a blatant cartographic invasion – blatant as coming so soon after the signing of the Panchsheel according to which both the countries were bound to respect each other’s territorial integrity and sort out differences through peaceful negotiations without preconditions; something Nehru refused to do during all the years leading up to the unfortunate happenings of 1962.

In his letter of 23 January 1959, Chou En-Lai for the first time pointed out the following things to Nehru. “First, that the Sino-Indian boundary had never been formally delimited and that no treaty or agreement had been concluded between the Chinese Central government and the government of India. Secondly, that the McMahon Line was a product of the British policy of aggression against the Tibetan Region of China. Thirdly, Zhou admitted that the Tibetan Local authorities had signed the Convention but were dissatisfied with the ‘unilaterally drawn’ line. Nevertheless, Zhou asserted that ‘the Chinese government finds it necessary to take a realistic attitude towards the McMahon Line.’”³³ (Map 3)

In his reply to the above letter on March 22, 1959, Nehru flatly asserted: “A treaty of 1842 between Kashmir on the one hand and the Emperor of China and the Lama Guru of Lhasa on the other mentions the India-China boundary in the Ladakh region. In 1847, the Chinese government admitted that this boundary was sufficiently and distinctly fixed. The area now claimed by China has always been depicted as part of India on official maps, has been surveyed by Indian officials and even a Chinese map of 1893 shows it as Indian Territory.’ Every one of the statements was historically untrue. As late as 1950, Indian maps showed the entire northern boundary as ‘undefined’.

In 1842, there was no linear boundary, only border zones (ilaqas). The Treaty of 1842 was a non-aggression pact concluded after a war. If it defined the boundary, why did the British (a) set up two boundary commissions to negotiate with China after making

Kashmir part of the Empire in 1846; (b) keep deliberating from 1847 to 1905 on possible boundaries to offer to a China reluctant to respond; and (c) make a formal offer in writing on March 14, 1899? Nehru could not possibly have been unaware of them when he wrote as he did two months after Zhou's letter. He wanted to shut the door on any discussion on the border."³⁴

A glance at the attached maps 1 and 2 makes the issue perfectly clear. Not only did India refuse to negotiate but – as we shall see later – stubbornly pursued a most ill-conceived and utterly foolish “Forward Policy” under which repeated attempts were made – inspite of persistent Chinese requests for negotiations – to forcibly recover from the Chinese control all the land that India claimed as hers on the strength of the new maps issued after July 1, 1954.

In the face of all the above, the most important question is why did Nehru do this? And even if an error of judgment was made, why could he not correct his course later on? Pundit Nehru was a leader with a deep understanding and wide perspective on national and global issues. He had been cleverly directing the Sino-Indian relations to the best possible course under the then prevailing conditions leading to the signing of the Panchsheel. With a deep insight he saw clearly, as stated in his note of 18.11.1950 to Patel, that:

(i) “I think it may be taken for granted that China will take possession, in a political sense at least, of the whole of Tibet. There is no likelihood whatever of Tibet being able to resist this or stop it. It is equally unlikely that any foreign Power can prevent it. We cannot do so. If so, what can we do to help in the maintenance of Tibetan autonomy and at the same time avoiding continuous tension and apprehension on our frontiers?”

(ii) “It is interesting to note that both the U.K. and the U.S.A. appear to be anxious to add to the unfriendliness of India and China towards each other. It is also interesting to find that the USSR does not view with favour any friendly relations between India and China.

These are long-term reactions which one can fully understand because India and China at peace with each other would make a vast difference to the whole set-up and balance of the world."

(iii) **"We cannot save Tibet, as we should have liked to do, and our very attempts to save it might well bring greater trouble to it. It would be unfair to Tibet for us to bring this trouble upon her without having the capacity to help her effectively. It may be possible, however, that we might be able to help Tibet to retain a large measure of her autonomy. That would be good for Tibet and good for India. As far as I can see, this can only be done on the diplomatic level and by avoidance of making the present tension between India and China worse."**

If India had taken any other course – particularly the course advocated by many people who blame Nehru for abandoning Tibet rather than actively supporting it against the Chinese – it would have unleashed terrible sufferings on the Tibetans and seriously handicapped both India and China at a time when they were just emerging out of a long period of colonial subjugation.

It is not, therefore, in terms of a lack of deeper understanding or an error of perception that we can explain Nehru's action in unilaterally modifying the border maps and insisting on China accepting it without questioning. Although it is very difficult to be certain about one's findings in such a sphere, we can safely assume that he may have been moved by a combination of the following considerations:

Nehru may have felt that since India had not only quietly acquiesced in China's taking over of Tibet but even helped China unequivocally in international forums, China should and would submit to India's stand on the Indo-Tibetan border as it had done in 1951 when India took possession of the Twang tract from the hands of the Tibetans. Moreover, he seems to have firmly believed – as is apparent from his November 18, 1950 note – that there was not the slightest possibility of China engaging into any serious armed conflict with India on such small matters as the exact

demarcation of the border. Most likely it was this firm belief that was at the root of the general intransigence shown by India on the border issue during the late fifties and early sixties and the “Forward Policy” adopted during the years 1961 and 1962 which eventually led to the humiliating defeat of 1962.

All the above should not be taken to mean that Nehru’s belief was entirely unfounded. In fact – as will be apparent when we go into the detailed elaboration of the events leading up to the 1962 fiasco for which mostly we were responsible and not the Chinese as is popularly believed by most in India – this belief of Nehru was quite sound, for the Chinese leadership in Beijing tried their utmost to avoid armed conflict with India and to sort things out by mutual negotiations till the very end. Even after the conflict began – having become unavoidable – they cut it short and unilaterally withdrew from most of the area acquired by them during the conflict.

Besides all the above, two other factors may have contributed, somewhat, to Nehru’s stand on the border issue. First, having widely circulated the new maps printed after July 1954, he may have found it very difficult to retract from this position. Actually, he often vacillated in his stand on the Western Sector border by admitting, more than once, in his public statements that it was never settled and that it was worthless area and at other times asserting that it was settled and not open to negotiations. Also, he may have felt that both super powers – the U.S.S.R (covertly) and the U.S. being sympathetic to India, China would not dare go for any large scale military adventure with India.

5. Nehru’s China Visit

“Elated by India’s international position and say in the world affairs, Nehru did not lose much time to ponder over the invitation extended by Chou En-Lai. Barely four months after Chou’s India visit, Nehru was in China on October 18, 1954. A two year trade agreement between India and China was signed on the eve of Nehru’s departure from India. Nehru received a red carpet welcome in China and was greeted by large numbers of people. Nehru stayed in China for next

ten days and met many Chinese heavyweights including Mao, Liu Shaoqi, Chou En-Lai, the Dalai and the Panchen Lama. Mao met Nehru four times separately on the 19, 21, 23 and 26 October. Although there was no specific agenda for the talks between Nehru and the Chinese leaders, reports from Beijing indicated that in the latter's discussion of the general question of preserving peace in Asia 'an alternative to SEATO had figured predominantly'.

Nehru, however, had the notes exchanged between India and China on the border intrusions in mind and raised the issue with Chou En-Lai. Nehru raised the matter in a private meeting by saying that 'the boundary drawn in your maps is not correct'. Chou En-Lai took a realistic view and told Nehru that 'China was still not been able to produce new maps'. Chou then patiently explained to Nehru why? 'The Sino-Indian boundary problem is an issue left over by the history. Since the founding of New China, we have not been able to survey and demarcate (the boundary), the newly published maps are the reprints of old maps, moreover, these maps were first published and circulated by the Kuomintang Government'. Reassuring Nehru, Chou said, 'once the conditions are ripe, we would produce new maps in accordance with the outcome of the negotiations'. The official Report also confirms these remarks of Chou who further told Nehru that 'there were such errors even in the depiction on these Chinese maps of the frontier of China with the Soviet Union and outer Mongolia'. It could be discerned from Chou's remarks that China wanted to renegotiate the boundary issue between Tibet and India especially after the Sino-Indian Agreement on Tibet that gave China basis for such negotiations as India had tacitly accepted the 'illegality' of McMahon Line by recognising Tibet as a part of China albeit it was known to all that India administered the area south of the McMahon Line.

A part from the boundary question, Nehru also discussed the issue of Nepal with China. There was also a discussion on the question of the restoration of China's status in the United Nations. Nehru returned with full praise for China's economic development. Thus

the 'Hindi-Chini Bhai-Bhai' euphoria had reached its zenith in 1954. In the hysterical euphoria generated in the wake of Hindi-Chini Bhai-Bhai, Nehru turned a blind eye towards China. Praising Nehru's efforts in extending the area of peace, Chou En-Lai maintained that the 'friendly co-operation of India and China constituted an important factor in safeguarding peace in Asia and the World.' Echoing similar sentiments, Nehru in his reply stressed the peaceful nature of China. 'I am convinced that the people of China, like the people of India, are devoted to the cause of peace'.

Reporting on his visit to Lok Shaba on November 22, 1954, Nehru stated that while it was difficult to ascertain the political consequences of his visit or to measure its effect on India's relations with China, it had undoubtedly brought about deeper understanding between the two nations. Both countries were fully aware of the differences in their political and economic structures, but such differences, Nehru stated, need not come 'in the way of our cooperation in many fields and, more especially, in our working for peace in Asia and the world'."³⁵

6. China's Perception of India and Its Role in World Affairs During the 1949-54 Period

When Patel in his letter of 7.11.1950 to Nehru noted that "...even though we regard ourselves as the friends of China, the Chinese do not regard us as their friends. With the Communist mentality of 'whoever is not with them being against them', this is a significant pointer, of which we have to take due note"³⁶, he was not far from the truth of the matter at that time. For one thing, at that time Mao was, actually, highly intolerant of even the concept of neutrality or non-alignment and had his own doubts about Nehru and was very suspicious of his intentions with regard to Tibet. However, as time passed, the Chinese became assured of India's unflinching conciliatory attitude towards them in general and on Tibet and Korean War in particular. They were very pleased with the help rendered by India to them in consolidating their control over Tibet. "In October 1950 India refused to sponsor a Tibetan

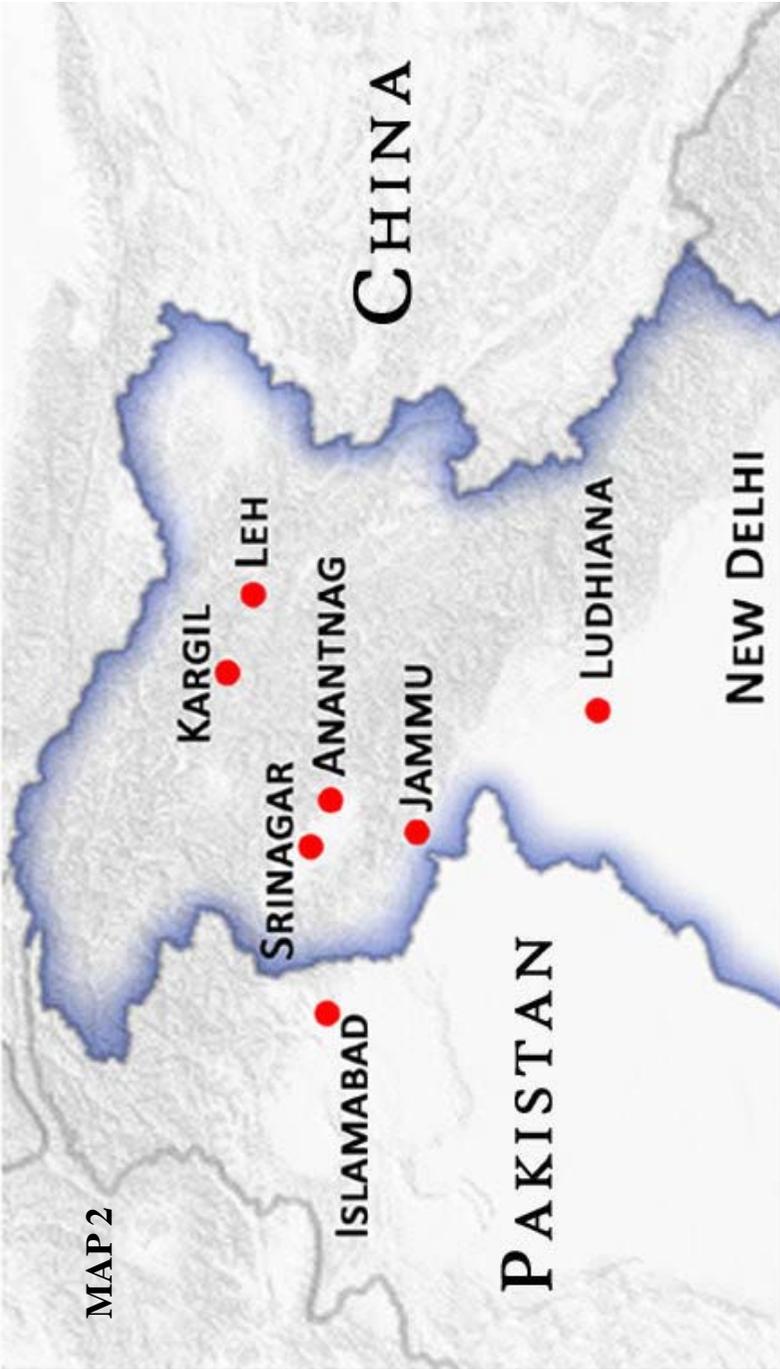
appeal to the United Nations. When El Salvador sponsored such an appeal, India played a key role in squashing it. Many governments, including the U.S., the British, and many Middle Eastern, were willing to follow India's lead on this issue, and India's opposition to the Tibetan appeal to the U.N. was, in fact, a major reason for its non-consideration. New Delhi also turned down U.S. proposals in 1950 of Indo-U.S. cooperation in support of Tibetan resistance to China. India also played a key role in persuading the young Dalai Lama not to flee abroad and try to rally international support for Tibet, but to return to Tibet and reach an accommodation with China's Communist government – an accommodation that occurred with the 17-Point agreement of May 1951. Then in 1954 India formally recognized China's ownership of Tibet as part of an effort to reach a broader understanding with China."³⁷

Besides *this factor of the positive* role played by India, the new Chinese communist government found itself surrounded by potential enemies on every side of its border. And, although it was a big and powerful country, it had not had the time to establish itself securely and was in a way amorphous and easily capable of being attacked on its sea coasts and by air. **In short, during this period, China needed India more than India needed it. Besides all this, it did not want to get entangled into any problem or dispute with India, not only during this phase – as emphasized by many writers in this field – but even in the long-run because it wanted to enjoy the same warm and friendly relations with its biggest neighbor as it historically always had.**

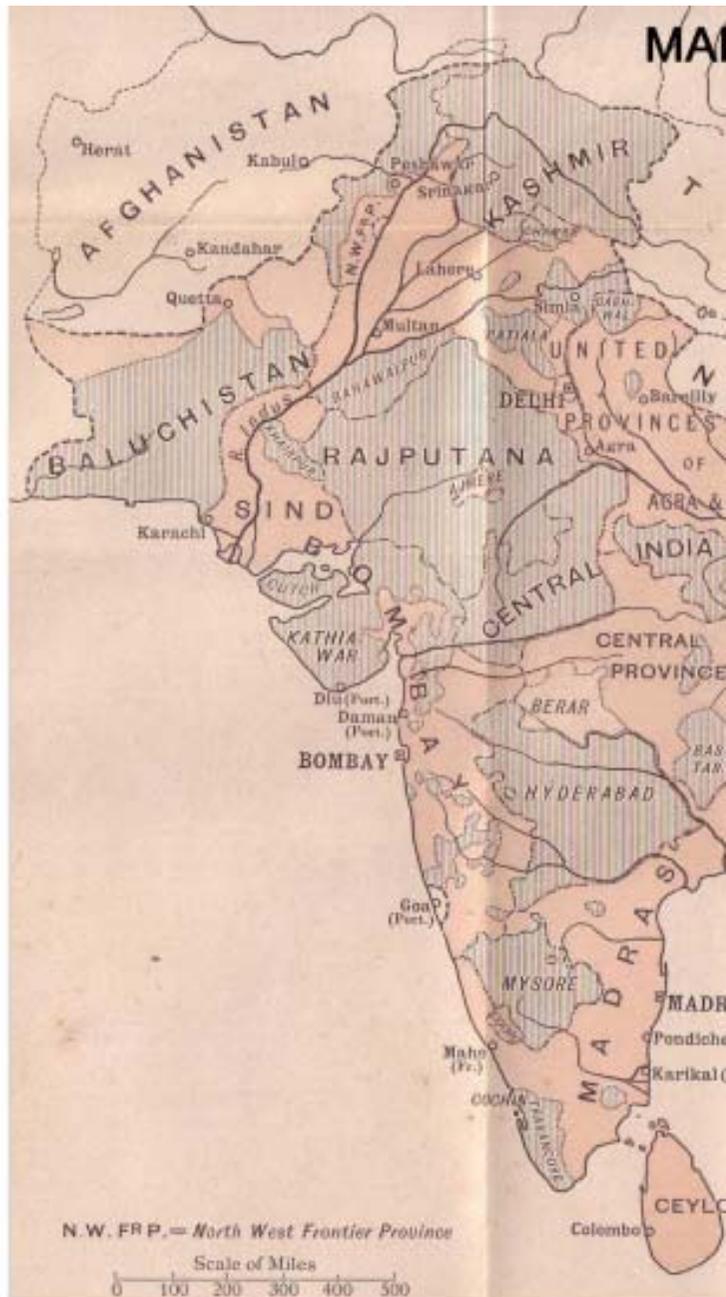
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The present map of the Western Sector of India. It has remained unchanged since its revision in July 1954.



This Map which shows the so-called "Outer Line" as India's northern boundary when the British Decided to Adopt the McMahon Line as the Boundary with China.

Source: *The Oxford History of India* by Vincent A. Smith, Oxford, 1923

INDIAN EMPIRE & CEYLON

1915

SHOWING POLITICAL DIVISIONS

- British Territory
- Under British Administration
- Native States



northern boundary remained the official Map of India till 1937
boundary in the North-East

“I can know nothing except what I myself am; if I know others, it is because they also are myself, because my self has assumed these apparently alien presentations as well as that which is nearest to my own mental centre. All sensation, all action of sense is thus the same in essence whether external or internal, physical or psychological.”

– Sri Aurobindo

(Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo 18, Page 58)